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ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of the Michigan Research Coordinating Unit (RCU) is to stimulate research and development activities within the State. This report reviews RCU activities in this area during the period July 1, 1967 to August 31, 1969. Problem areas include staffing and funding. In light of accomplishments and problems, the RCU has been successful and should be continued. (JS)

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FINAL REPORT

Project Number 7-0804

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MICHIGAN RESEARCH COORDINATING UNIT

FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

LANSING, MICHIGAN

October, 1970

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a final report of the activities of the Vocational Education Research Coordinating Unit in Michigan for the period of July 1, 1967 to August 31, 1969. The Michigan RCU was authorized on June 1, 1965 but was not established until the United States Office of Education issued a contract on October 27, of that year. This original contract and a subsequent extension allowed the RCU to continue operation until June 30, 1967. From July 1, 1967 through August 31, 1969 the RCU was funded under grant number OEG-0-8-000804-1791(085).

Between July, 1967 and January, 1969, the RCU was part of the Program Development Section of the Division of Vocational Education in the Michigan Department of Education. Since January, 1969 it has operated within the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Services, Department of Education.

The overall purpose of the Michigan Vocational Education Research Coordinating Unit is to stimulate research and developmental activities within the state which will improve existing programs of vocational education and develop needed new programs of vocational-technical education; to function as a coordinating unit for occupational research among agencies and institutions conducting research and developmental activities; and to disseminate information that will reduce the time lag between research and practice.

Specifically, the Michigan State Plan for Vocational Education, Part I, states that the functions of the Research Coordinating Unit may include but are not restricted to:

(1) assisting the planning, e.g., the identification of specific needs for information for vocational education decision-makers, the assignment of priorities for meeting those needs and the coordination of research activities aimed at fulfilling these priorities;

(2) carrying out research, assisting others to design research, stimulating relevant research by means of grants and purchasing research by means of contracts;

(3) collecting, organizing, storing, and retrieving of data from reports and studies done by state staff, from reports and studies in which the state staff was involved, and from other relevant reports and studies;

(4) disseminating innovations from present and past research;

(5) systematically defining and using existing means of communication, both interpersonal and non-personal, in carrying out dissemination tasks;

(6) developing new channels of commu ation where needed;

(7) contributing to teacher pre-service and in-service training and other staff training, and consultation in terms of relevant research findings, research methodologies, use of research finding and methods of effective, systematic communication;

(8) assisting vocational education planners to use research in the development of programs.

METHODS AND FINDINGS:
MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RCU activities described in this section include: (1) sponsoring research training workshops; (2) serving as host for the National Conference on the Diffusion of Educational Ideas; (3) advising research councils and other committees directly concerned with vocational education; (4) gathering a wide variety of research data on an ad hoc basis; (5) establishing priorities for research and development; (6) preparation of research reports; (7) conducting seminars on topics relevant to vocational education; (8) aiding in the planning and organizing of a professional association of vocational educators in Michigan; (9) developing procedures for the evaluation of research and exemplary proposals; (10) participating in the development of the Michigan State Plan for Vocational Education; (11) promoting pilot and demonstration projects; (12) stimulating research; (13) consulting with local educational agencies; (14) establishing and maintaining an ERIC file; and (15) defining the future role of the Michigan Research Coordinating Unit.

Research Training Workshop

A research training workshop was sponsored by the Michigan RCU in cooperation with the University of Michigan Extension Service in November of 1967. Three-member teams participated from twenty-one public schools, intermediate districts, and community colleges in which vocational education programs are offered. The theme of the workshop was "Research: A Guide for Vocational Education." The objectives were to: (1) focus on

activities that would help staff members in local schools become aware of research; (2) use research methods in dealing with local problems; (3) become knowledgeable about research procedures that could be used; and (4) make known that assistance is available to develop and fund research proposals.

National Conference on the Diffusion of Educational Ideas

The Michigan RCU served as host for the National Conference on the Diffusion of Educational Ideas held March 26-28, 1968, at Michigan State University. Forty-two of the forty-four states having RCU's were represented by fifty-four directors and staff members. A total of ninety-nine persons were registered. Six major papers were presented and discussed: (1) "Summary and Critique of Educational Diffusion Research" by Richard O. Carlson; (2) "Needed Research on Research Utilization" by Ralph Lippett and Ronald Havelock; (3) "Needed Research on Diffusion Within Educational Organizations" by Everett M. Rogers, and Nemi Jain; (4) "Innovative Methods for Studying Innovations" by Nan Lin; (5) "Implications for Practices from Research on Educational Change" by Richard I. Miller; and (6) "Information Systems; A Vehicle for Diffusion of Educational Ideas" by Celianna I. Wilson.

Copies of the proceedings of the conference were printed and distributed to all conference participants, all RCU directors, teacher-training contact persons in Michigan, selected staff members in the Michigan Department of Education, ERIC, USOE, authors of major papers and others. In addition,

authors received reprints of their individual papers for distribution through professional channels.

Counselors Workshop

A workshop for secondary school counselors to improve their competencies in working with students oriented toward technical careers was partially funded by the Division of Vocational Education and conducted August 14-25, 1967, on the Ferris State College campus at Big Rapids, Michigan. The RCU staff was involved in planning, budget[illegible], and attending the workshop.

Michigan Educational Research Council

A member of the RCU served as Secretary-Treasurer for the Michigan Educational Research Council from July, 1967 to January, 1969. The Council consisted of 34 organizations and institutions interested in educational research in the state and was organized in 1962 for the purpose of promoting educational research in Michigan.

Dropouts

During the summer of 1968 the RCU gathered data on the prevention of student dropouts for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. This information was used to develop specific programs which encouraged Michigan's youth to remain in school.

Legislative Advisory Committee

An RCU staff member served on a legislative advisory committee which was composed of twelve educators. Activities of the committee resulted in the

introduction of legislation designed to increase state support for occupational education.

Program Development

The RCU helped prepare a list of eleven primary areas of responsibility for program development in vocational education. This was part of a concerted effort to develop long-range plans, and to establish realistic goals and objectives for vocational education in the state of Michigan.

Vertically Integrated Occupational Curriculum

The RCU served the State Vocational-Technical Education Curriculum Committee in an advisory capacity. The committee developed a concept paper entitled "A Vertically Integrated Occupational Curriculum for Schools in Michigan." The paper was widely disseminated in an effort to stimulate the development of effective occupational education programs in all regions of the state. In essence, it provided a framework for the development of a model for curriculum improvement and for the stimulation of further research.

Dissemination Seminars on Manpower Studies for Michigan

The RCU cooperated with the Michigan Office of Economic Expansion and the Michigan Employment Security Commission to disseminate the findings of Manpower Studies throughout the state. Twenty seminars were held during the Fall of 1967 to acquaint school administrators, counselors, and representatives from business and industry with the results of the research and implications for change for vocational education.

The "Michigan Manpower Study", conducted by the Battelle Memorial Institute, and the "Michigan Technician Needs Study", conducted by Ferris State College, identified employment projections by occupational areas, skill requirements for future employees, and the need for positive attitudinal changes on the part of teachers, parents, students, administrators, and the public toward the preparation of young people for the world of work. Pertinent findings from thirty-two area vocational studies sponsored by the Division of Vocational Education and local districts were also brought before the seminar groups.

Highlights of Vocational Education in Michigan

A report entitled "Highlights of Vocational Education in Michigan" was prepared by the RCU for use by the Michigan State Board of Education. It summarized the federal legislation that has had a significant effect on vocational education programs and course offerings throughout the state. The report revealed the enrollment growth by years, types of programs from 1918 to 1966, the funds appropriated by years for vocational education, the relation of state and federal appropriations, and how these funds have been expended.

Upper Great Lakes Regional Development Commission

The RCU staff participated in meetings of state governmental departments and in the drafting of the Department of Education's section of the proposal to request support for Michigan's portion of a three-state Upper Great Lakes Regional Development project. The project was designed to

stimulate the economy of the sparsely populated, low income areas of northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

NOELS (New Office Education Learnings System)

The RCU staff participated in a series of seminars held to discuss the feasibility of an innovative office education curriculum. Dr. Frank W. Lanham of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, was principal investigator for the project.

Michigan Occupational Education Association

The RCU took an active part in planning and organizing the Michigan Occupational Education Association (MOEA). The MOEA, affiliated with the American Vocational Association, is a statewide professional organization of vocational educators.

Trade and Technical Teachers Conference

Two RCU staff members served as evaluators of the Trade and Technical Teachers Conference held February 23-24, 1968 at Michigan State University. In addition, they spoke on the implications of the Michigan Manpower Studies for electronics teaching at the secondary, post-secondary, and college level before two sub-group meetings of this conference.

State Vocational-Technical Education Curriculum Committee

An RCU staff member served as secretary of the State Vocational-Technical Education Curriculum Committee for one year. This committee

was one of twenty-four state curriculum committees appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Special Projects and Teacher Education

The RCU staff analyzed the procedures used in evaluating teacher education project proposals submitted by various institutions which prepare vocational education teachers in Michigan. A suggested evaluation procedure was presented to the Deputy State Director of Vocational Education for consideration and use for evaluating projects.

Development of State Plan

RCU staff members participated in the development of a state plan for vocational education under the 1968 amendments to the Vocational Education Act of 1963, focusing on the areas of research and training, exemplary programs and projects, and evaluation.

Review of RCU

The status, position, operations, and commitments of the RCU were re-examined in view of considerations inherent in its reassignment to the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Services. These considerations included the additional professional and technical resources and opportunities generated by the reassignment, the necessity to maintain the close working relationships with the Division of Vocational Education spelled out in the State Plan for Vocational Education, and the demands

created in evolving a new state plan.

Industrial Arts Curriculum Project

Members of the RCU staff provided consultative services and partial funding for the implementation of a portion of the Ohio State University Industrial Arts Curriculum Project (IACP) in the Pontiac Public Schools. The "World of Construction" phase of the project was implemented on a pilot basis in three junior high schools within the district as a pre-vocational offering. The schools involved have a large number of black students, a diverse instructional staff, and are located in an urban-industrial setting.

There were three unique characteristics of the program: (1) a rigorous evaluation design was included; (2) plans were made for systematic dissemination of results; and (3) community participation in the project was required.

BEST Project (Basic Electronics Systems Technology)

In August, 1969 a demonstration project entitled "Basic Electronics Systems Technology" was funded in the Farmington Public School District. The project was a pre-vocational program designed to teach students the principles of converting, controlling, and utilizing electrical energy. At the time of funding, evaluation and dissemination procedures were being developed.

Publications

The staff compiled a statistical data and information paper entitled "Highlights of Vocational Education in Michigan." The data included enrollment, major federal legislation effecting vocational offerings, numbers of programs by services, numbers of public and secondary schools, community colleges, appropriations and equipment, and construction statistics.

Two members of the RCU staff served on a committee which developed a public information bulletin on vocational education.

An occupational coding system manual was prepared and published by the RCU. The manual contains the course titles, descriptions, code numbers, and glossary of terms compiled from USOE information.

The RCU compiled a summary of national and state statistical data projections for vocational and technical education for use by the Division of Vocational Education.

A directory of reimbursed vocational education programs in Michigan secondary school districts was prepared for use by the Division of Vocational Education.

Proceedings of the Research Training Workshop conducted by the RCU in cooperation with the University of Michigan School of Education, Department of Vocational-Technical Education held November 20-22, 1967, at Ann Arbor was published and disseminated.

Completed Research Projects

A. "Developing a Program of Occupational Education for All"

The planning phase of this project, conducted by the Niles Community Schools, was completed. The project is continuing with the assistance of Title III ESEA funds. This four year program was designed to:

(1) develop better attitudes toward work;

(2) increase familiarity with work opportunities and the tools of the world of work;

(3) create an understanding of the free enterprise system;

(4) focus the attention of students, parents, and teachers upon realistic occupational goals; and

(5) provide basic skills for entering employment and/or further training.

B. "Development of a Title III Planning Project to Plan and Implement Pre-Technical Education in Michigan"

This Title III planning project was designed to implement a proposal suggested by the Division of Vocational Education, entitled, "A Project Designed to Demonstrate the Feasibility of Pre-Technical Programs in High Schools." It was a pilot program in pre-technical education at the secondary level, with programs in mathematics, industrial arts, physics, English, and other pre-technical related subject areas. The project also

included provisions for:

(1) development of curriculum materials for statewide dissemination;

(2) incorporation of vocational guidance activities;

(3) a continuing evaluation of the project throughout all stages.

C. "Teaching for Wage Earning"

The Michigan RCU helped support a summer institute at Western Michigan University. The results of this developmental project and the information gathered from another project entitled "Synthesis of Research Findings in Home Economics Education for Wage Earning" was used to construct a total integrated curriculum of home economics.

D. "Vocational Training Program for Childcare Aides"

This project was designed to:

(1) introduce high school girls to the principles of childcare;

(2) provide a laboratory for training in wage-earning service occupations;

(3) evaluate existing childcare training facilities;

(4) determine the kind of experiences and activities necessary for job success in childcare work; and

(5) develop cooperative education programs in childcare development.

E. "The University of Michigan Leadership Development Program for Vocational and Technical Education"

The Division of Vocational Education funded approximately 15% of the

$31,012.00 for this project to cover the reduction caused by the cut in research appropriations under section 4(c) of the Vocational Education Act of 1963. The project identifies and prepares people for leadership roles in administration and supervision of vocational-technical education in Michigan. It is an on-going effort.

F. "An Experimental Pilot Study to Explore the Use of an Audio-Visual-Tutorial Laboratory in Secretary Skills Area"

This project explored the use of an audio-visual-tutorial laboratory for the development of secretarial skills. Units of instruction were placed on single concept sound films and slides with tape for use in study carrels. Findings indicated that learning was more efficient and the cost of instruction was reduced.

Other Activities

The following projects were initiated but not completed during the period of this report:

(1) "A comparative Evaluation and Analysis of Work Experience and Work-Study Programs in Livonia Public Schools in Relation to Their Impact on Youth."

(2) "An Exploratory Study to Analyze New Skill Content in Selected Occupations in Michigan and the Mechanism for Its Translation into Vocational Education Curriculum."

(3) "The Development of a Wage Earning Program in Home Economics Involving Institutional and Industrial Cooperative Training."

(4) "Eight-Week Intensified Office Education for High Ability Students."

(5) "Counseling Employment-Bound Youth."

(6) "Project SKILL (Summer Key in Lifelong Learning)."

PROBLEMS

The RCU encountered four problem areas during the period of this report: (1) the RCU at most times was understaffed; (2) the amount of money available for use by the RCU was too small to accomplish its objectives; (3) the reassignment of the RCU from the Vocational Education Division to the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Services; and (4) the reformulation of RCU objectives as reflected in the State Plan for Vocational Education.

CONCLUSION

Considering the problems and accomplishments to date, the work of the Michigan Vocational Education Research Coordinating Unit has been successful.

RECOMMENDATION

The Michigan Vocational Education Research Coordinating Unit should continue to operate.